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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 15 June 1998 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On 11 June 1998, the occupying Israeli army issued an order allowing for the establishment of the so-called civil guards in the Jewish settlements in the West Bank. This dangerous development represents yet another provocative and hostile act by the occupying Power. In addition to its blatant violation of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and relevant Security Council resolutions, this act could directly endanger the safety and well-being of the Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. It is obvious that, in practice, these "civil guards" would be an armed militia of extremist and fanatic settlers, serving as a private army or as another occupying army within the occupied territory.

In its resolution 904 (1994) of 18 March 1994, the Security Council, by consensus, called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to continue to take and implement measures, including, inter alia, confiscation of arms, with the aim of preventing illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers. Clearly, the Israeli authorities are doing the opposite, and they are doing so at a time when the aggression, hostility and violence of the settlers are increasing against the Palestinian people. Further, on the same day, the Israeli army issued another order granting the illegal settlement "Ariel" the formal status of a city, implicitly indicating that it is not a part of the occupied territory anymore. This illegal action serves as yet another confirmation of Israel's expansionist and colonialist policy in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

All of these illegal actions must be strongly condemned by the international community, and the Security Council in particular, as the body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, must ensure that the occupying Power reverses such actions and conform with international law and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on settlements.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 36, 37 and 87, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nasser AL-KIDWA
Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations